Intro

* + \*Brianna will read the passage on the screen
* \*\*PRAY\*\*
	+ The last time we were in Hebrews was June 1st, so let’s take a bit of time to…

**Introduction: Remembering Where We Are in Hebrews**

* **A) Hebrews 4:14-16 introduces the central section of Hebrews and 10:19-25 concludes it**
	+ **Kari – would this fit on a single slide?**



* + Even though it’s been a while since we’ve been in this book, I’m thankful that…
* **B) The central theological arguments of Hebrews 5:1—10:18 are summarized in Hebrews 10:19-21**
	+ - In other words, the preacher uses the 3 verses leading up to his conclusion in order to summarize 5 ½ chapters of argument
	+ **Hebrews 10:19-21 – Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God.**
		- This passage summarizes three main features of the argument building into our passage today: (1) Jesus is our better high priest, (2) Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant, and (3) Jesus is our sufficient sacrifice
			* Looking at it section-by-section…
	+ **i. Jesus is our sinless great high priest forever (Hebrews 5-7)**
		- * Hebrews 5 began by discussing the weakness of human high priest, contrasting it with the sufficiency of Christ’s intercession…
		- **Hebrews 5:1-6 – For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness… Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”; just as He says also in another passage, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”**
			* So, both categories of high priest (human & divine) were appointed by God, but one stood immeasurably above the other…
		- **Hebrews 7:26-27 – For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**
			* Jesus is the better high priest, able to usher us into the presence of God
				+ Additionally…
	+ **ii. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant that brings the Old Covenant to an end (Hebrews 8-10)**
		- Sd
		- **Hebrews 9:12-15 – …and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**
			* Sd
		- **Hebrews 10:9 – ...He takes away the first in order to establish the second.**
			* Sd
	+ **iii. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that brings about the complete forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 10:11-14)**
		- * How did you get into God’s presence in under the Old Covenant?
				+ Since Genesis 3, the “way” into God’s presence was always paved with death

A high priest needed to slaughter an animal to cover his own sins before entering the Holy of Holies—the location God chose to make His presence dwell

* + - * But what if you weren’t the high priest? How did you get access into God’s presence?
				+ YOU needed to die… (\*explain more?)

And if you tried to get into the Holy of Holies apart from the title of high priest and without the appropriate sacrifices, you WOULD die!

* + - **Hebrews 10:11-14 – Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**
			* If you’re looking at our passage for today, v 20 says that Jesus inaugurated “a new and living way” into the holy place—into the presence of God
				+ Now, DEATH is no longer necessary to gain access to God **[message slide: You Have Access to God – Use It!]** because the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient to cover the necessary requirement of death

This NEW and LIVING way to God’s presence brings about…

* **3 responses to Christ’s sacrificial and priestly work**
	+ In our passage we have 3 exhortations: (1) Draw Near (to God), (2) Hold Fast (our confession), and (3) Consider/Stimulate (love & good deeds)
		- Those exhortations serve as the ACTION we do, based on the WORK that’s been done (does that make sense?)
			* The first exhortation is that we would…

**I. Draw Near to God – Faith**

* All throughout the book of Hebrews, the preacher has used the context of the Old Covenant to show the sufficiency of Jesus
	+ He’s tied back into the religious practice of the Jews since the construction of the tabernacle, leading to the temple, and up to (their) present day
		- They knew the generational rituals tied to the worship of God, they knew and had been inside the temple, they were familiar with the sights, sounds, and smells that came with all of it
			* Additionally, they were acclimated with the gravity affiliated with the Holy of Holies – that area in the center of the temple that could only be accessed once a year by the high priest
				+ For the average Israelite, gaining entry into that sacred space was out of the question—for some, it was probably even a terrifying prospect

They would have known the stories of those who have died by simply touching the items in the Holy of Holies, or priest who had lost their lives by entering in an unworthy manner

* + - * We don’t have any of this first-hand experience
	+ The weight of this exhortation to “draw near” is difficult to understand as an outsider…
	+ **Hebrews 10:22 – …let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**
		- To the Hebrews, the presence of God was a daunting location that was previously affiliated with death
			* Imagine there was a lion **[picture of a lion]** that one person was called to see one time a year
				+ All others who approached him outside of that time would be mauled to pieces
		- But now, YOU are being commanded to draw near to this lion
			* Not only that—you were to do it with a sincere heart and in full assurance of faith that you wouldn’t have your face chewed off
			* That’s one of the reasons why “drawing near” (προσέρχομαι) has been such a theme in the Book of Hebrews – the idea of regular men and women coming into the presence of God without dying was unprecedented and terrifying
				+ And yet, it stands as (arguably) the central theme of the whole book:
	+ **Hebrews 4:16a – Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace…**
	+ **Hebrews 7:19b – [the New Covenant] is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**
	+ **Hebrews 7:25a – Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him…**
	+ **Hebrews 10:1 – For the Law… can never… make perfect those who draw near.**
		- Our passage for today…
	+ **Hebrews 10:22a – …let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith…**
	+ **Hebrews 11:6 – …without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**
		- It’s also seen twice in Hebrews 12 when talking about approaching the Holy Mountain
			* In other words—we are unapologetically called to DRAW NEAR to God!
				+ And do so…
* **A) With confidence in the object of your faith: Jesus**
	+ If anyone would seek to draw near to God apart from faith in Jesus, he or she would meet the same results as those in the Old Covenant
		- In other words, there is only death for those who reject Jesus
			* But WITH Jesus, the Christian is called to draw near…
	+ [in Greg’s outline, but he put it in the ESV rather than NASB1995] **Hebrews 10:22b – …with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith…**
		- A sincere heart and full assurance of faith assumes two things:
			* 1) you’re not willfully deceived about your own heart, and
			* 2) you accurately understand who Jesus is and what He’s done
				+ An insincere heart will minimize his own sin
				+ An insincere heart will make excuses for wrongdoing
				+ An insincere heart will put trust in itself

The hard news is: a sincere heart understands that…

**Jeremiah 17:9a – The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick…**

Which leads to the conclusion of that passage:

**Jeremiah 17:9b – …who can understand it?**

A sincere heart will humbly acknowledge its own self-deception and propensity towards wickedness

* + - * + But remember the second part of v 22– it’s not enough to have sincerity of heart alone; we also need to accurately understand who Jesus is and what He’s done
		- One of my favorite passages that display this is found in Luke 7(36-47)
			* \*explain OR read
				+ In the end, Jesus says…

**Luke 7:47 – For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.**

* + - * She didn’t come with excuses for her sin – she was aware of her own wickedness
				+ Nor was she utterly deceived about the state of her heart, like Simon the Pharisee

Instead, with a sincere heart, she looked at the immeasurable love and forgiveness that’s found in Jesus, which caused her to cast herself at His feet

Like our passage says, she had “full assurance of faith”

A lack of assurance in Jesus leads us to run AWAY from Him in our sin

It leads us to misunderstand the power of the Cross, believing the lie that our sin can somehow overwhelm its forgiveness

It leads us to despair in our own failure and inability rather than *hope* and *joy* in our union with Christ!

* + - * Draw near to God!
	+ Do so…
* **B) By means of Jesus’ washing and cleansing blood**
	+ - The end of v 22 shows the MEANS by which we are able to draw near to God
	+ **Hebrews 10:22c – …having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**
		- * (\*if time, talk about the internal (“hearts”) and external (“bodies”) nature of this purification)
		- I recognize I didn’t paint the most wonderful picture earlier of God’s presence when I equated it to approaching a man-eating lion
			* It’s true that Hebrews will go on to say…
				+ **Hebrews 10:31, 12:29 – It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God… for our God is a consuming fire.**

…while it IS terrifying to be in His presence, it’s also the sole location each created being desires above all else to be

And the only way this can happen is if we’re washed clean

* + - * + \*gospel (death and terror for those unwashed | life and joy for those cleansed by Christ)
		- So DRAW NEAR
			* If you’re in Christ, you can draw near to Him right now
				+ It’s a living and new way, so it no longer requires death to gain access to His presence

In this very moment and in all others, you can fellowship with the Creator

While drifting off to sleep, while driving in the car, while at your job, while studying for an exam – DRAW NEAR

* + - And as you do…

**II. Hold Fast to Your Confession – Hope**

* + This serves as the second exhortation, built off the argument of 5 ½ chapters…
* **Hebrews 10:23 – Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful…**
	+ This represents another theme seen in this book that’s conventionally believed to be a sermon
		- The preacher has been compelling his people to “hold fast” throughout this message
			* In 3:6, we’re called to hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope (which is in Christ Jesus)
				+ A few verses later, we’re exhorted to hold our original confidence firm to the end
		- In 4:14, we’re told to hold fast our confession – very similar to v 23 of our passage
			* What is our confession, and how are we to hold it fast?
				+ Commentator George H. Guthrie helps us understand what this means:
				+ **The writer's use of the present tense in 10:23 perhaps emphasizes the hearer's call to “hold on” as an ongoing call. An ancient author variously uses the word to mean “hold to, keep, detain, retain, contain, occupy, or possess…” The author of Hebrews uses κατέχω to speak of keeping a tight grip on the Christian faith, keeping it from slipping away. – George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews: From Biblical Text... To Contemporary Life*, 344.**

So, holding fast to our confession looks like trusting in Christ – as our passage says – “without wavering”

Have you ever “wavered” in your faith?

This exhortation can be unduly overbearing if you misunderstand what it’s calling us to do

We waver in our faith when we lose our grip on the OBJECT of our faith

Of COURSE we’ll sin, we’ll succumb to doubt, we’ll go through seasons where it feels like we’re hanging on for dear life

But look at the end of the passage: hold fast to the confession… because HE WHO PROMISED is faithful

This “holding fast” is not contingent on our own ability to hand on to Christ, but on His promise to hold tight to us

And as John 10 talks about, nothing can snatch anything out of His divine grip

But that also doesn’t mean we are incapable of sinfully wavering in holding fast our confession

The command exists because it’s intended for us to follow

But do you want to know another encouraging point?

We’re not alone

John Calvin talks about this in his commentary covering this passage:

* + - * **He requires also profession or confession, for it is not true faith except it [shows] itself before men… He therefore bids them not only to believe with the heart, but also to [show] and to profess how much they honoured Christ. – John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 238.**
				+ The nature of a “confession” is that it’s a public matter

Therefore, we have one another to keep accountable in holding fast this confession

**III. Intentionally Consider One Another – Love**

* + To recap, our first exhortation called us to DRAW NEAR to God through the *new* and *living* way of Christ Jesus
		- Our second response to the work of Christ is to HOLD FAST our confession, grounded in the faithfulness of Christ
	+ Our third and final exhortation from the passage is found in the final two verses…
* **Hebrews 10:24-25 – …and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**
	+ The noun used in the Greek for “stimulate” in rendered a little more aggressively in lexicons as “rousing to activity, stirring up, [or] provoking”
		- “stimulate” in the NASB makes you think of a classroom, like stimulating a good discussion with a well-worded question
			* However, “rousing to activity, stirring up, or provoking” sounds a bit more like what I do on Saturday mornings when my wife and I are trying to get the kids out the door on time for soccer (\*more?)
				+ But the purpose of this rousing to activating is…
* **A) Purpose to encourage love and good works**
	+ **Hebrews 10:24b – …how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds…**
		- It’s not enough for *us* to be practicing love and good deeds, we need to ensure we’re stirring up the same in one another
			* Love is an internal disposition (or a determined will), and good deeds are an outflow of that love
				+ You will not neglect good deeds or assembling together if you cultivate (or stimulate) that necessary love for one another

This begs the question: what does it take to grow in love for someone?

* + - While it might take a mix of carrots and sticks (so to speak) to get everyone to soccer…
* **B) How do we accomplish stimulating one another to love and good deeds?**
	+ - From our passage, let me suggest three applications from this passage
	+ **i. by being in committed groups where you know one another**
		- * You can’t grow in your love for someone if you’re never around them or pour effectively no time into them
				+ Our passage makes that quite clear…
		- **Hebrews 10:25a – …not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some…**
			* Sd
	+ **ii. by giving and receiving encouragement**
		- Sd
		- **Hebrews 10:25b – …but [encourage] one another…**
			* Sd
	+ **iii. by increasing encouragement until Christ returns**
		- Sd
		- **Hebrews 10:25c – …all the more as you see the day drawing near.**
			* Sd

Conclusion

* + I’d like to conclude with a narrative from Foxe’s Book of Martyrs that contains each element that we see: drawing near to God, holding fast to the confession, and stimulating fellow believers towards love & good deeds:
* \*context
* **When they had arrived at Coventry, a poor shoemaker, who used to serve him with shoes, came to him, and said, "O my good master, God strengthen and comfort you." "Good shoemaker," Mr. Saunders replied, "I desire thee to pray for me, for I am the most unfit man for this high office, that ever was appointed to it; but my gracious God and dear Father is able to make me strong enough." The next day, being the eighth of February, 1555, he was led to the place of execution, in the park, without the city. He went in an old gown and a shirt, barefooted, and oftentimes fell flat on the ground, and prayed. When he was come to nigh the place, the officer, appointed to see the execution done, said to Mr. Saunders that he was one of them who marred the queen's realm, but if he would recant, there was pardon for him. "Not I," replied the holy martyr, "but such as you have injured the realm. The blessed Gospel of Christ is what I hold; that do I believe, that have I taught, and that will I never revoke!" Mr. Saunders then slowly moved towards the fire, sank to the earth and prayed; he then rose up, embraced the stake, and frequently said, "Welcome, thou cross of Christ! Welcome everlasting life!" Fire was then put to the kindling, and, he was overwhelmed by the dreadful flames, and sweetly slept in the Lord Jesus. – John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, 151.**
	+ Like this dear brother – DRAW NEAR to God, no matter life’s circumstances
		- HOLD FAST the confession – even in the face of a torturous death
			* STIMULATE OTHERS towards love and good deeds – as we daily welcome everlasting life with our wonderful Christ Jesus